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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: KOREA TO WITHDRAW FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RACE TO
FOCUS ON SYG CANDIDACY

REF: SEOUL 2886

Classified By: Ambassador Mark D. Wallace, reasons 1.4 b,d

11. (C) Korean Deputy Permanent Representative Oh Joon called USUN Ambassador Mark Wallace on Thursday August 24 to inform USUN that Seoul would be withdrawing its candidacy for the Asian non-permanent seat on the Security Council. Oh Joon said that Korea would inform the Asian group next week of its decision, but wanted to inform the U.S., "as close friends", in advance. He said that Seoul wants to focus its attention on other races in the UN system, noting that Korea would reconsider and possibly try again in a couple of years. The withdrawal leaves Indonesia and Nepal as the two candidates for the single Asian seat up for election this year (to replace Japan on the Council).

12. (C) Comment: Many in NY have speculated that the Koreans would be unable to run successful simultaneous campaigns for FM Ban's Secretary-General candidacy and to secure a seat on the Security Council. We expect the withdrawal to be widely interpreted as a signal that Ban's strong showing in the first straw poll (which reftel notes "exceeded expectations" in Seoul) has convinced the Koreans that it is worth putting their eggs in his basket. The decision may also impact Kathmandu's future calculations. Conventional wisdom has been that Nepal would step down prior to election day rather than face defeat in a three-way race (where they were likely to be eliminated following the first ballot). A two-way race might change the equation.
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